

Pat Roberts, Cory Gardner, Lindsey Graham, Todd Young, Marco Rubio, John Boozman, John Barrasso.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 5014

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk due a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 5014) to amend title 31, United States Code, to provide for automatic continuing resolutions.

Mr. MCCONNELL. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceedings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, this week, the Senate returns with precious little time left to finish important matters of business. Last week, both Houses of Congress passed the annual Defense bill with veto-proof majorities. If President Trump takes the rather ridiculous step of vetoing a pay raise for our troops in order to defend the honor of dead Confederate traitors—or whatever other contrived grounds he comes up with—Congress must override that veto.

On Friday, both Chambers of Congress also passed a 1-week continuing resolution, giving us until the end of this week to finish an omnibus appropriations bill to fund the government. As usual, the appropriations bill will include several important pieces of related legislation. One that doesn't get enough attention is a bipartisan energy bill.

Earlier this year, during the debate over the Energy bill, Senate Democrats

insisted that a provision to reduce HFCs—a very harmful greenhouse gas that is driving our climate change problem—must be included in the bill. Unfortunately, we had to hold up the bill until a bipartisan agreement could be reached on this critical provision, which would be the single biggest victory in the fight against climate change to pass this body in a decade.

Today, I am very happy to report that we have made very good progress toward an agreement on HFC reduction. We are about to get it done. That is one of the biggest victories to fight global warming in a very long time.

I want to thank Senators CARPER, KENNEDY, and BARRASSO. They have worked very diligently and very hard to craft a compromise.

Finally, as we all know, it is imperative we pass another round of emergency Federal relief from the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Today, the bipartisan group of Senators who have been diligently working toward an agreement will announce the results of their work: a package of over \$900 billion that includes an agreement on assistance to State and local government. Notably, there is no agreement on corporate immunity. We look forward to reviewing their work. Democrats remain 100 percent committed to getting another round of emergency relief to the American people before the end of the year and in a robust, bold way because America needs it so badly.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now, a year that was full of bad news for the country is coming to an end with some very good news. Over the past 8 to 9 months, American scientists, biochemists, and researchers rushed to produce a safe and effective vaccine to the COVID-19 pandemic—and they have succeeded in extraordinary fashion.

We don't have just one but several candidates for a vaccine, each of which has shown to be 90 percent effective in clinical trials. One of those vaccines has been approved, authorized by the FDA for emergency use. And as we speak, an assembly line of workers in masks, gloves, and face shields are pulling doses out of the freezer, loading them into cold storage palettes, and onto trucks to be shipped to States across the country.

The discovery of a COVID-19 vaccine within the timeframe of a calendar year is a crowning scientific achievement of the 21st century. It should bring not only a feeling of relief to the country—indeed, to the entire world—but also deep admiration and pride for America's scientists and our medical workers.

I remember, in the early days of the pandemic, going to the window of our Brooklyn apartment each night to applaud our frontline workers. The whoops, claps, and metallic clang of pots and pans echoed for miles. Our

medical researchers—as well as thousands of Americans who selflessly volunteered for clinical trials—deserve the same national expression of gratitude.

We can show our gratitude here in Congress by communicating clearly that the COVID-19 vaccine is safe, effective, and that every American should inoculate themselves when it becomes available. Skepticism about vaccines was already too high before the pandemic. Several polls have shown it to be an alarming concern with respect to the COVID-19 vaccine. It is an absolute disgrace that the Republican majority on the Homeland Security Committee has invited a prominent skeptic of the COVID-19 vaccine to deliver testimony in a hearing this week. Public figures at all levels should be building up confidence in a vaccine, not giving a platform to those who undermine it.

At the moment, the vaccine is being distributed to medical personnel, doctors, nurses, frontline workers, and the most vulnerable populations. I myself will take the vaccine as soon as it is appropriate and recommended. I will not skip the line. But make no mistake, we should all lead by example, commit to taking the vaccine, and tell our constituents to take it as well.

The CDC and our States will continue to advise which populations should be inoculated based on availability, and we will follow that guidance.

ELECTORAL COLLEGE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now one other note—today, members of the electoral college are gathering in all 50 States and the District of Columbia to formally select Joe Biden as the next President of the United States of America.

Typically, the meeting of the electoral college is merely a formality. The Presidential election took place over a month ago. The result is not in doubt. In almost any other year, both major parties would have fully and publicly accepted the will of the American people by now—the peaceful passing of the torch, a hallmark of our grand democracy. But this year, it seems as if Joe Biden has had to be declared the winner of the Presidential election again and again and again—and still, our Republican colleagues have not fully come to grips with that reality. Just how many times does President Trump have to lose before rank-and-file Republicans—before most Senators—acknowledge that Joe Biden will be the next President of the United States?

Last week, more than 100 Republican Members of the House of Representatives signed their names to a lawsuit that would invalidate the results of the election in four swing States. For any serious person, much less a Member of the U.S. Congress, to sign their name to such an anti-democratic document is beyond shameful.